

HAAF ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

HAMILTON ARMY AIRFIELD

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US Environmental Protection Agency

Technical Support

Ray Zimny
US Army Corps of Engineers

Jim McAlister
US Army Corps of Engineers

COOPERATION AGREEMENT FOR WETLANDS RESTORATION IS SIGNED!



Pictured from left are: Marin County Supervisor **Cynthia Murray**; Congresswoman **Lynn Woolsey**; **Dominic Izzo**, Principle Deputy Secretary of the Army (Civil Works); **San Schuchat**, Executive Director, California Coastal Conservancy (U.S. Army photo by Cindy Fergus)

The Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) for construction of the Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project was signed on Earthday, April 22, 2002. The signing ceremony was held in Hangar No. 3 at the Hamilton Army Airfield. Now that the PCA has been signed, the restoration project can begin as soon as the property is transferred. Transfer is currently scheduled to occur in September 2002. Dredge material may begin arriving on the site as early as fall 2003, via the dredge pipeline pictured to the right.

The first 1700 feet of the 5-mile pipeline were completed in January 2002. The pipeline will start nearly 5 miles out in San Pablo Bay, allowing ships to offload dredge material without having to enter the sensitive habitat area. The pipeline will carry the

dredge material into the airfield where the Coastal Conservancy plans to deposit over 10 million cubic yards. The dredge material will be used to raise the existing ground level by five to seven feet, in line with the level of the Bay. This process will require several years to complete, making the pipeline a critical component of the restoration project.



Safe to Play at Palmisano Park

TESTING CONFIRMS THAT AN ALLEGED DISPOSAL AREA DOES NOT EXIST

Palmisano Community Play Park, located near the Southgate residential complex, was constructed in 2000 to serve as a community playground.



As the result of a personal interview documented by the Army Archives Search Report in September 2001, the Navy determined that an investigation of the site was in order. The interview in question was made by an individual who reported seeing oils, paint, grease, and debris being dumped in the park's vicinity in the early 1950's.

The Navy first studied aerial photos of the playground area spanning several decades, but did not find any evidence of previous dumping. The Navy also researched a 1996 pipeline construction project that involved excavating a trench 25 feet wide and 20 feet deep through this same area to determine if anyone recalled seeing any indication dumping while the trench was being excavated. Indications of previous dumping would include discolored soil, odor, or debris. The Navy interviewed several individuals including the city of Novato building inspector who was on the site daily throughout construction. Although no one recalled seeing any evidence of contamination, the Navy, in consultation with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), decided to proceed with soil and groundwater sampling to make certain that contamination does not exist.

Palmisano Park remained closed during the sampling period from March 18-20, 2002. The Navy coordinated with DTSC and RWQCB in selecting the sampling locations. The locations were selected based on the individuals recollections of the disposal areas, and included 16 samples within the playground, three samples within the ballfield, and one sample from east of the storm drain pipeline.

Based on visual observations, field screening techniques, and laboratory analytical results, no materials were found within the investigated area. The Navy, DTSC, and RWQCB jointly concluded that no evidence of a dumpsite exists in the area, and that the playground and ballfields continue to be safe for kids and adults alike.



Drillers and geologists install groundwater wells to be used with the Biosparging system.

Navy Installs New Groundwater Remediation System

In May, the Navy began installing a biosparging system at the former NEX Gas Station at DoD Housing Facility (DoDHF) Novato. The system, which is similar to one that operated near the main pump islands a few years ago, will be placed along the Northern portion of C Street. The goal of the system is to reduce groundwater methyl-*tert*-butyl-ether (MTBE) concentrations by at least 95 percent. MTBE is a gasoline additive that increases the combustion efficiency of car engines, resulting in an estimated 40% reduction in exhaust emissions. MTBE also dissolves readily in water, which has led to its presence in groundwater supplies across the nation.

Over the past seven years, the Navy has undertaken several actions to reduce the amount of MTBE in the groundwater, including removing the gasoline storage tanks; and air sparging, which removed an estimated 23,000 pounds of fuel from the ground. Installation of the current system will reduce the amount of MTBE in the groundwater to even lower levels.

Biosparging involves injecting air into groundwater in order to increase the oxygen content. The increased oxygen content assists microbes living in the plume in breaking down MTBE. The biosparging system consists of a series of air-injection wells and a network of groundwater monitoring wells. Air-compressors, which force the air into the plume, are housed in a nearby shed. Along with the biosparging system, the Navy is also installing a Soil Vapor Extraction (SVE) system as a back-up. The back-up SVE system would only be used if necessary, and would remove any gasoline vapors that may be released as part of the biosparging effort.

Nearly all of the biosparging system will be plumbed in trenches below the ground surface in order to minimize traffic impacts and to maintain the character of the neighborhood. The system is planned to operate for approximately 1.5 years starting in July. For more information on the Navy's environmental program at DoDHF Novato, please visit the Navy's website (see backpage for website address).

Meet Joy Lanzaro

Joy Lanzaro has worked in the Army's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Environmental Office since November 2000 as the BRAC office manager and assistant to Ed Keller. You may have met Joy and her dog, Quagmire, if you visited the BRAC's library or attended a Restoration Advisory Board meeting. One thing is certain, if you meet Joy you will be greeted with a welcoming smile and friendly introduction.



Joy and her dog, Quagmire, explore Hamilton during lunchtime walks.

The BRAC office was Joy's first exposure to the environmental remediation process. Joy has a Bachelors of Science from California State University Northridge in Environmental and Occupational Health Science, and was attracted to the position because it offers a first-hand experience of realigning a military facility. She is also interested in the concept of reusing land by converting it into wetlands. In the past year and a half, Joy has had an opportunity "to observe many aspects of this complex machine. I really love my job. It aligns me with people who I genuinely respect and strive to be more like. The best case scenario is that I develop as a person into a combination of my boss, my co-worker, and my dog...it's a work in progress."

Outside of the BRAC office, Joy has many interests including riding and training horses, dancing the Lindy Hop, hiking, and mountain biking. Recently, she completed a three-month training program for a marathon, a 26.2-mile footrace, raising money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. "I would not be running this marathon without the support of all the people associated with the project here at Hamilton. It's a privilege to work with great people, and it's even better when those people help you do great things."

The BRAC library, which Joy manages, contains documents that support the base's clean-up efforts. Joy finds the historical documents particularly intriguing. "[The historical documents] are a window into Hamilton's past. It's like looking through a family photo album. Because I love the era of the 1940s and because I am familiar with Hamilton as an entity now, I am a spectator of this history"

Visit Joy and the rest of the BRAC office. The BRAC library is located in the BRAC offices and is open Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Hamilton Links

Army BRAC Property

Airfield Parcel The Army received several comment letters on the Record of Decision/ Remedial Action Plan (ROD/RAP). The responses to those comments were forwarded to regulators for review in February 2002. The Army hopes to finalize the ROD/RAP this summer.

A Draft Finding of Suitability for Early Transfer (FOSET) of the airfield parcel was forwarded to the regulators for review on March 1, 2002. The public review period will hopefully begin this summer, since the Army would like to transfer the property this fall, and the Coastal Conservancy would like to complete their preliminary actions in preparation for receiving dredge material starting in fall 2003.

Hospital Hill The Army has now signed the Finding of Suitability to Transfer (FOST) and instructions have been sent to the Corps of Engineers to work out the deed language with the City of Novato. The property should be transferred soon.

Bay Trail Hamilton Bay Trail Public Access Plan was released in April 2002. The Plan will extend the trail to the north and south of Hamilton and will provide additional trailhead parking access, signage, benches and trashcans hoping to minimize impact to current Hamilton residents and potential restoration areas. The Planning Commission approved the plan during a public hearing on May 13. The item went to Council on June 11.

Buffer Trench Construction Continues

The Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is continuing work on the buffer trench adjacent to Landfill 26. As shown in the photo, the vent risers have been installed along the portion of the trench that was constructed this winter. The vent risers conduct methane upward from the trench to a height of 10 feet above the ground. Methane mixes with air inside the vent riser, and once it reaches the opening it is immediately diluted to a point where it does not pose a health risk.

The Corps continues to monitor soil gas probes adjacent to the Shea Homes development and is working with the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to determine what additional steps should be taken to address the source of the methane.





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Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) Update

RAB Responsibilities

The main responsibility of a RAB member is to attend bimonthly meetings and share information with community residents. After the Army BRAC property transfers, the RAB would like to continue meeting to oversee remediation of the North Antenna Field, Landfill 26, and the Coastal Salt Marsh, which could last up to two years.

Upcoming Meetings

The next **RAB Meeting** will be held at the Hamilton School Multi-Purpose Room.

- August 28, 2002, 7 p.m.

For More Information

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Information Repositories

Marin County Public Library, Novato Branch

1720 Novato Boulevard, Novato, CA 94947
tel: 415.897.1141

HAAF Army BRAC Environmental Office

Please call for an appointment.

www.spk.usace.army.mil/cespk-pm/haaf/rab/rab.html
www.efds.w.navy.mil/Environmental/Novato.htm